

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
SUBMITTED BY
DAVID MARKEY, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
March 20, 2023

FY21 TO FY23 STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREAS

1. I.D.E.A.

Commit to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (I.D.E.A.) in every aspect of Agency grant-making and other programs and operations, including governance and administration.

2. Pandemic Recovery

Lead the post-pandemic recovery of the nonprofit arts and culture sector in the District and play an important role in the District's broader economic and social recovery efforts.

3. Community Awareness and Connectedness

Improve communications, raise awareness of CAH programs, strengthen community connections and networks between and among stakeholders in the field, and elevate the role of the arts and humanities throughout the District.

4. District Government Alignment

Strengthen alignment with both the Executive and Legislative branches of District government.

5. Governance and Organizational Culture

Rethink governance and administrative protocols to improve Commissioner and staff relationships and morale and improve the CAH brand within District government and in the broader community.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 TO DATE

We continue to move grant paperwork through the system. Thanks again to the Grants, Public Art, and Finance teams for their various roles in this process. Brian will provide more details in his report, but we've established purchase orders for well over 90% of our close-to-900 grantees. I previously mentioned some issues around setting up "vendor" accounts for new grantees. We have been working with multiple colleagues across agencies to try to move the vendor registration process forward. Purchase orders cannot be created for these grantees until that process is complete. Early in February we were able to work with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) and our colleagues in Accounts Payable to move these payments forward through a direct voucher system.

On March 22, the Mayor will submit her proposed FY 2024 Budget to the Council. CAH will have its budget hearing before the Council's Committee of the Whole on March 30.

CURRENT GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- **FY23 Facilities and Buildings: Relief (FAB-R)**

This is the third year of this particular relief grant program. The number of applicants is comparable to that of the FY22 cycle i.e. 130. Because this is a relief grant, we are able to engage in an internal review process. We have approximately \$1.4m to disburse through this program and plan to award 124 of the applicants.

- **FY23 Commemorative Works Technical Assistance Program**

This is a new Public Art Department grant. Up to four (4) selected District-based artists or artist teams experienced in designing and fabricating large-scale outdoor public art, commemorations, memorials, and public engagement will be a part of a collaborative concept design team that will provide design services to District communities, Main Street Organizations, and/or other groups to support the development of four commemorative works projects in Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8. The application deadline for this program was extended through today, March 20. There are currently 23 drafting applications.

- **FY24 GOS**

The application window for this program closed on February 21. There was a small increase in the total number of applicants to the program for FY24 i.e., 173 over 162 for the FY23 cycle. We have also increased the number of panels for the program. Ten (10) panels are scheduled to take place over the first three weeks of April.

PROGRAMMING UPDATES

- ***Business of the Arts*** is a series of workshops and moderated panels offered by CAH to its community of individual artists, humanities practitioners, and organizational members with the goal of building their understanding and skills across a wide range of subject areas. Our colleagues, Camille Ashford and Melvin Witten are coordinating the series in collaboration with the various programming teams at CAH. Engagement is planned for April through June/July. We have a series of exciting online and in-person opportunities in the works with the goal of engaging the community in learning opportunities provided by CAH and other industry experts. More to follow in the coming weeks.

- **Words on Fire:** This festival took place earlier in the month at the Theater of the Arts at the University of the District of Columbia. The event had previously taken place there in 2015 and 2016, so it was great to return to the venue. Both days consisted of wonderful student and teaching artist performances of existing and original work and an impromptu audience participation dance work-out with our very own Marcia Howard. Warwick Lloyd from St. Anselm's Abbey will represent the District in the national finals from May 8 – 10.
- **Grantee Application Assistance Program:** In our efforts to reach deep into our community and to connect with communities that may not be familiar with CAH and its opportunities, we are putting together a cohort of current grantees who will go into the community and help orient new applicants to our grant opportunities and assist them in navigating compliance requirements and the grantee application portal. We have 10-12 artists signed up to participate in the program and are currently confirming locations, dates, and times for engagement. One of the wonderful responses to the program from these artists is their desire to give back to the community by passing on all they have learned in the process. We plan to roll out the program in early-April and have it run through the early weeks of the May launch of our fellowship and project-based grants.

REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

- **The Evolution of AHFP:** The Arts and Humanities Fellowship Program (AHFP) is one of CAH's signature grant programs for individual artists. The commitment to supporting individuals has grown significantly in recent years i.e. AHFP has grown by 50% in two years to a total of \$3.1m in funding to 421 artists in FY23. The Grants Team has worked closely with the Marketing Dept. to engage grantees through a survey and listening sessions to solicit input from them around possible changes to the program. Terrell will speak more to some of these proposed changes in his report.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & STAFFING UPDATES

CAH is committed to ensuring the agency is a welcoming and inclusive place for staff members to work purposefully and collectively towards CAH's mission to serve its community.

- **Professional Development**
We have re-engaged with organizational development consultant, Shereen Williams on next steps in our CAH cultural wellness journey for staff and plan to roll out engagement in the coming month.

- **Staffing Updates**

- Welcome to David Martinez as the latest addition to the agency. David joins the Legal Dept. as our new general counsel. He comes to us from the District of Columbia State Athletic Association, which is also an independent agency like CAH, where he served as their general counsel. We are already mining his knowledge to help inform our own processes at CAH. I would like to give a special thank you to our Attorney Advisor, Robin Carr-McClure. She has served in the role of Interim General Counsel with great integrity and dedication, and has been a great asset to me, personally, in my own time as an interim.
- We recently completed initial interviews for the Arts Learning Coordinator and hope to have a candidate selected by early-April.
- As we reimagine our work in the areas of outreach and engagement, our colleague, Melvin Witten's role as Legislative Affairs Specialist has morphed into that of Community Development Specialist. The core focus of this role will be to develop new relationships and engagement opportunities with organizations and individuals not currently in our fold. A second, partnering outreach role of Community Engagement Specialist, with a focus on internal community engagement is in the works.
- Our new executive director, Aaron Myers, will have his confirmation hearing before the Council on March 30, following the agency's budget hearing. We have all had the opportunity to meet with him informally and are excited about his addition to the team. We are committed to onboarding him as smoothly and as comprehensively as possible, so he is able to begin to learn the breadth and depth of what it is we do. It is often in times of transition that the metal of character shines through and I would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank the staff for their support of me in the interim role over the past eight months.

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